

they receive their health care services. Indeed, as the Balanced Budget Act aimed to provide more choices to seniors through the Medicare Plus Choice Program, the Medicare Freedom to Contract Act is the logical extension of the Medicare Plus Choice Program. It creates yet another option for our seniors.

In fact, a case can be made that if seniors contract privately with their physician for services and do not bill Medicare, it will save money. It will extend the life of the Medicare Program beyond the 10 years the Balanced Budget Act supposedly will do.

Finally, Mr. President, we have many lessons to learn about the effects of health care mandates. However, denying seniors the option of using their own money to pay for their own health care is a lesson in Government that's gone mad, and that is a lesson we have all learned too well already. I urge my colleagues to support this needed correction.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— FEDERAL RESERVE NOMINATIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following Federal Reserve nominations on the Executive Calendar: Calendar No. 305 and Calendar No. 306.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I might inquire of the distinguished majority leader, what were the Executive Calendar numbers?

Mr. LOTT. I asked unanimous consent that we proceed to executive session to consider the Federal Reserve nominations on the Executive Calendar. I know the Senator from Iowa has been discussing these nominees already this afternoon, and I am advised that he is going to oppose a time agreement to get a vote on these nominations, so I was going to make note of the fact that my intention is to set the votes on these nominations for later today.

If it is not possible, if there is objection to that, then I would have to say it would appear to me that these nominees could not get confirmed this session. We have a number of nominations we are trying to get cleared on both sides of the aisle.

I had indicated to Senator DASCHLE we would try to move these nominees. We also have similar holds on the FCC nominees. But if we can't get those cleared in the next couple of days, it would be my intent to try to move those to a vote in the same manner tomorrow. So I am trying to emphasize that. I think these are important nominees. It would seem to me we need to have nominees to the Federal Reserve

Board confirmed. These are the President's choices and his recommendations. This is, obviously, a very critical board. While I might agree with the Senator about some of his reservations and disagree with some of the actions they take and a number of things that have occurred over the years, I do think that unless there is a major objection to one or both of these nominees on the qualifications basis or experience or something of that nature, I feel an obligation to try to move them forward.

Mr. HARKIN. If the majority leader will yield.

Mr. LOTT. Sure.

Mr. HARKIN. I respond by saying I appreciate the position the majority leader is in. Quite frankly, I think that the occasion of considering a couple of nominees to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors should be a time of some debate and some discussion on the Senate floor as to the Fed policy and to the direction the Fed has taken.

Again, I do not need to remind the majority leader of this. He knows full well there seems to be so many people who think the Federal Reserve is some great Federal agency that is not beholden to the Congress. I keep pointing out it is a creature of Congress. It is not a constitutional entity. It is a creature of Congress and by law we have the right and I think the constitutional obligation to oversee the Federal Reserve, obviously to pass judgment, to advise and consent on nominations but also to give guidance and direction as to what their policy ought to be. And I think that these nominees deserve to have some discussion and debate.

I would say in all honesty to my friend from Mississippi, there are on this side other Senators who I know want to engage in this discussion and debate who cannot be here today. I am here. And I am willing to talk—well, I have my notebook here, if the majority leader would like to see it. I have a few hours I could talk.

Mr. LOTT. It doesn't look very thick.

Mr. HARKIN. It is pretty thick. I have a lot that I can say about them.

Mr. LOTT. If the Senator will yield.

Mr. HARKIN. Yes.

Mr. LOTT. I know he could talk at great length on this and other subjects, and there may be other Senators who would like to talk on them who are not here today. Quite frankly, I am not impressed that they are not here. We are in the final 2 or 3 weeks of the session, and when Senators say they can't be here on Monday and they can't be here on Friday, it sure makes it awful hard to do the people's business. But the Senator is within his right; certainly these are important nominees, but I believe that on these nominees as well as the FCC nominees and hopefully maybe even others, if the holds are continued on them, I need to call them up.

If there is objection, as apparently the Senator from Iowa intends, I just want to make it clear why they are

being objected to and who is objecting to them and we will move on. But I do want to make it clear to one and all that in view of the lateness of the hour in the session, the odds of being able to spend a great deal of time or to get these nominees called up again is not very likely because we have a number of urgent matters that are pending that we are going to have to take up this week and next week.

And so I just wanted to put that on the RECORD so that the Senators here will know this is probably not a temporary delay; this is probably a delay until next year.

Mr. HARKIN. If the leader will yield further, if last week is any prelude to this week, I think we are going to have large gaps of time this week on the Senate floor. There will be time for people to come out and discuss extraneous and various things. As I said, I know there are some other Senators who have expressed to me a desire to engage in some discussion. I do not know how long but some discussion. And I think the leader would agree this is important enough that we ought to discuss it anyway. I know he is not impressed that they are not here today. I understand that. But I am hopefully operating within my right to engage in a discussion on these nominees. I would, of course, object to them being brought up en bloc. I do not desire to thwart these nominations. However, I do want them brought up separately and singly as individual nominees and to be able to use some time this week to talk about them.

I would be prepared to do that at great length today. I am here, and I am in pretty good physical shape so I am ready to discuss them at length today, if he would like to do that, as is his right, but I would also be willing to see what we could do during the remainder of the week to engage in some discussion, and I will do that. If there are gaps this week, I will come to the floor and talk about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield further on his reservation, if there are some gaps, we could have more talk about these nominees or other nominees later on this week. There may not be the large gaps that there might appear because we do have a number of appropriations conference reports that we think are going to be ready this week, plus the DC appropriations issue we believe we can resolve, although it will take a little time, 2 or 3 hours on that, plus Senator BYRD and Senator STEVENS have indicated they would like to have the line-item veto disapproval which could take 10 hours.

And that does not count regular bills. We have to do something about the Amtrak strike this week, one way or the other. So I think we are going to have a good bit of time that will be used. But I know the Senator will be glad to talk when the time comes, and I appreciate his comments.

I renew my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HARKIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is my understanding that Senator HARKIN does expect to address this subject on the Federal Reserve System nominations for a further 30 minutes at this time. It is also my hope the Senate could consider and confirm the nominations of our former colleague Senator Wyche Fowler and Thomas Foley for ambassadorial positions immediately following the previously scheduled 5 p.m. vote. I anticipate rollcall votes being necessary on these two ambassadorial nominations. Therefore, additional votes can be expected following the scheduled 5 p.m. vote.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. LOTT. With that in mind, I now ask that following the remarks of Senator HARKIN and Senator HUTCHINSON, who is on the floor also, the Senate stand in recess until 4:30 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the indulgence of the majority leader. I do feel very strongly about this issue. That is why I am objecting to their being brought up, and if they were brought up, I would certainly be here to speak about them at length. I don't think there should be votes on them today. I would be prepared to talk at length further on Fed policy and on these nominees in particular, if need be. Hopefully, we can reach some resolution of this matter. If not now, perhaps later on. Not today, certainly, but hopefully perhaps sometime later on this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN'S STATE VISIT

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Madam President, I rise today, on the eve of Chinese President Jiang Zemin's official state visit to the United States. I rise today because I believe that, while it is important to continue relations with a country that contains one-fourth of the world's population, it is also important for us to remember that this one-fourth of the world's population—these 1.2 billion people—suffer today under

an oppressive regime committed to a violent suppression of dissent, a regime which steadfastly refuses to recognize inalienable human rights, a regime which uses imprisonment, torture, and execution as tools to forge a society that is void of individual liberty.

It is a regime that has a government program to market human organs and body parts, using the execution of prisoners as a profit method for the Government of China; a regime that systematically jams Radio Free Asia. While coming to the United States and professing their belief in liberty, they systematically jam the expression of freedom that this country subsidizes, underscoring its importance by broadcasting throughout Asia.

Yet, with all of these facts, all of this evidence, the United States rolls out the red carpet for President Jiang Zemin of China, the same leader who was named General Secretary of the Communist Party 3 weeks after the protests were quelled with violence and bloodshed in Tiananmen Square. This is the same leader who is the hand-chosen successor to Deng Xiaoping, the so-called Butcher of Beijing. He is the same Communist leader who, in a 1990 interview, only a few weeks after the Tiananmen Square massacre, in an interview with Barbara Walters described the Tiananmen killings as, and I am quoting President Jiang Zemin, "much ado about nothing." This is the Communist leader who, in an interview published in the Washington Post just last Sunday, continued to defend the Tiananmen Square massacre and suggested the violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators was the price of allowing economic reform in China. Madam President, this is the Communist leader who is traveling throughout the country like a king.

Nothing underscores the differences we have with President Zemin more than his recent comments on the subject of human rights. Earlier this month, as he prepared to come to the United States, President Zemin said, "Both democracy and human rights are relative concepts and not absolute and general." That bears repeating. President Jiang Zemin said about democracy and human rights, they are not absolutes, they are not something that is essential, something that is God given, something that is basic to being human beings. But, he says, they are relative concepts.

As citizens of the United States, the great foundation on which our country was built is the undeniable and unchanging principle that all mankind is created equal, and that we are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights. Those rights attend to us as human beings, whether we live in China or whether we live in the United States. Nothing is more central to our understanding of the role of government. President Zemin and the Chinese leadership flagrantly reject this and over 1 billion Chinese know oppression and fear and violence as part and

parcel of their daily lives. I would say to President Zemin that human rights are not the possession of governments, to be dispensed at the will or the discretion of those who wield power. Human rights is not, as he has insisted, a relative concept. It is a transcending value that crosses cultures, societies, and forms of government. Liberty is not the province of America, and to my colleagues and to this administration I would say that our defense of freedom must not stop at our own shores.

The values which we cherish as Americans we must defend for people everywhere. We always have. The Great Wall that separates our governments today is the great wall of human rights violations. I hope the President and the leadership of Congress in their meetings with President Zemin this week will, frankly and forcefully, communicate the deep sense of anger and the deep sense of outrage that is stirred in this country by the ongoing human rights abuses in China.

It is time for straight talk with the Chinese leadership. It is time for an American foreign policy guided by a commitment to the cause of freedom. I urge the President to remember the words that he spoke in December 1991 as he campaigned for the office which he now occupies. Candidate Clinton in 1991 said, in reference to the Bush administration:

The administration continues to coddle China, despite its continuing crackdown on democratic reforms, its brutal subjugation of Tibet, its irresponsible export of nuclear and missile technology, and its abusive trade practices.

He accused the Bush administration of coddling China because of these circumstances within China—brutal subjugation of Tibet, irresponsible export of nuclear missile technology, and crackdown on Democratic reforms. He said, because of that, the Bush administration is doing too little. They are coddling China. I ask the President, what has changed? The only thing that has changed is the condition of the Chinese people and the oppression under which they live every day. Conditions are worse by every measure and by every standard. Things have gotten worse in China. Yet the administration has totally changed its position. The position of the President has changed. The condition of the Chinese people has changed also, but only for the worse.

I believe that China's flagrant disregard for human rights should be enough. But, since our policies toward China have not changed, the human rights abuses continue to take a back seat to a foreign policy that seems to be driven by profit projections. The administration now, instead of sanctioning China, wants to sign an all-encompassing new nuclear pact with China; in effect, to reward them.

The logic in all of this new policy, called constructive engagement, is that if we will engage China and we will trade with China and we will see economic expansion in China—and their